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ABSTRACT

Customized Contract Training (CCT), which involves contracting to design short term, non-credit courses and workshops to meet the training needs of specific employers, is the new buzz-word at community colleges. Though many assume this type of school-business partnership benefits everyone, the potential negative effects on community colleges as educational institutions are rarely examined. Growth trends within the last 20 years have altered the priorities of community colleges toward vocational programs, discounting the need of employees for broad liberal arts backgrounds that has been validated by research studies. The growth of CCT creates a potential drain on weakened liberal arts resources. While community college leaders support CCT as serving all sectors of the community, clearly, profit-making corporations have the most to gain in terms of reduced costs for training employees. Community colleges gain increased revenue and state of the art technology, but face profound disruptions in their curriculum and a potential loss of educational autonomy. These losses are not worth the gains. Given the conflicting interests of companies, colleges, workers, and students, CCT cannot be expected to benefit everyone equally. (EJV)

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CUSTOMIZED CONTRACT TRAINING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: WHO REALLY BENEFITS?

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Paper presented at the 1985 Convention of the
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CUSTOMIZED CONTRACT TRAINING IN COMMUNITY COLLEGES: WHO REALLY BENEFITS?

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Customized contract training (CCT) is the new buzz word at community colleges across the country. Two-year institutions are signing contracts to design short-term, non-credit courses and workshops to meet the training needs of specific employers. Although everyone is trying to get in on the action, the potential negative effects of CCT on the community colleges as educational institutions are rarely examined. It is usually assumed that everyone benefits from this type of school-business partnership.

The reality, of course, is considerably more complex. In this paper I plan to examine the scope of CCT and its impact on different constituencies. Specifically, I want to argue that although corporations gain clear benefits from CCT, the colleges, students and workers may well lose more than they gain.

First, however, I want to review some of the empirical data pertaining to community colleges to provide a context in which to understand CCT. Community colleges have been the fastest

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growing institutions in higher education for the past two decades. In 1983, community colleges accounted for 38% of all enrollment in higher education. In 1960, the comparable figure was only 16%. In 1983, 41% of all undergraduate enrollment and 54% of all first-time freshman enrollment were in community colleges (Chronicle of Higher Education, 1985).

Along with this rapid growth, community colleges have become primarily vocational institutions. In 1965, only 13% of all community college enrollment was in vocational courses, with the rest being in transfer courses. By 1984, two-thirds of all enrollment was vocational. This same trend can be seen when looking at certificates and associate degrees granted. In 1971, 51% of the degrees granted by community colleges were in vocational fields. Eleven years later this figure jumped to 71% (Grubb and Jussqad, 1984; Pincus, 1980).

These trends have profoundly altered the priorities of community colleges. When asked how community colleges had changed during the 1970s, 91% of a national sample of educators and community college leaders said that vocational programs had increased in importance while only 1% said that they had become less important. On the other hand, only 28% of the sample said that transfer programs had increased in importance, while 31% said they had decreased; the rest said that they hadn't changed (Beck and Smith, 1984).

The rate at which students transfer to four-year institutions has remained low, although statistics are far

from precise. According to the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, between 15 and 25% of the students ultimately transfer (Mahoney,1984). Cohen and Brawer (1982) estimate that only 5% of community college students get an associate degree and transfer after two years. In a well-controlled study of the 1970 cohort of students entering community colleges in the City University of New York, Lavin et al. (1981) shows that 26% had transferred after 5 years. This figure is probably higher than most because of the relatively liberal transfer policies that existed at CUNY during the admissions years.

Some small percentage of this minority of students who transfer to a four-year school eventually earn a bachelor's degree, but no one seems to know how many. Neither Cohen and Brawer nor the AACJC would hazard a guess. Lavin et al. found that only 10% of those who had entered a CUNY community college in 1970 had a bachelor's degree by 1975. Another 10% were still enrolled but "most of these students were not within striking distance of the degree" (p. 224). Clearly, attending a community college is not a particularly good route toward getting a bachelor's degree. In fact, most community college students don't even get an associate degree or a vocational certificate.

In spite of these data, there is some controversy over whether community colleges meet the needs of their students, especially those from working class and minority backgrounds. Supporters of two-year institutions cite follow-up studies of

former community college students where a large majority say that they were satisfied with their educational and that their educational goals had been accomplished. These findings are typical of most follow-up studies (Pincus, 1980).

A different story emerges if one looks at the attitudes of first-time freshmen as measured annually by the American Council of Education (Astin, et al., 1983). In 1983, for example, 77% of community college freshmen said that they eventually aspire to the bachelor's degree and 46% say that their chances of getting the B.A. were very good. These data have been reasonably consistent for the past 15 years. These high educational aspirations are in marked contrast to the reality that only a tiny minority of community college students will ever graduate from college.

Several studies even suggest that community colleges actually depress the educational aspirations of students. In a well-controlled study of City University of New York students who aspired to a bachelor's degree, Alba and Lavin (1981) found that with the same educational and economic backgrounds, students in four-year colleges did better than students at two-year colleges in a wide range of measures of academic success. Astin (1972) came to a similar conclusion using national data although he was not able to control all of the variables used in the Alba and Lavin study.

Finally, there is no clear evidence that community college vocational students earn better salaries or have more skilled

jobs than those with the same amount of non-vocational education (Pincus, 1980; Wilms and Hansell, 1980). All of the available evidence clearly indicates that those with bachelor's degrees are better off economically than those with less education. According to a recent paper outlining a research agenda for community colleges by Richardson (1985), "Even though community college administrators have been extremely critical of the study by Wilms and Hansell, and Pincus, there have not been comparable studies in most states to provide better information" (p. 7; also see Grubb, 1984).

Not surprisingly, many of the recent reports on improving education in the 1980s have either omitted any discussion of vocational education or have acknowledged that traditional vocational education has often been too narrowly focused for today's world. In order to understand and be employable in today's rapidly changing world, say the reports, students must have broad backgrounds in the liberal arts with a special emphasis on basic literacy skills. Vocational education supporters pick up the same theme by saying that students should also have broad technical backgrounds before specializing in a particular occupation (AACJC, 1984; Bottoms and Copa, 1983; Groves, 1985). In other words, the increasing vocationalization of public community colleges is in sharp contradiction to what most educators believe that today's students need to stay afloat in today's competitive labor market.

Getting back to the main topic of this paper, the growth of CCT could make things even worse. By its very nature, CCT is narrow training that doesn't even have the pretense of a balance between applied and theoretical skills. If CCT begins to draw resources away from the already weakened liberal arts curriculum, community college students could end up with an even narrower education than they already receive.

Scope of Customized Contract Training

More and more community colleges are signing contracts with business and industry for short-term training. According to a national survey of two-year isntitutions in the spring of 1983, 69% of the reporting institutions has at least one contract. The median number of contracts held by community colleges in the 1981-1982 academic year was 8.0, up from 6.7 the previous year. Deegan and Drisko (1985) state: "A large majority of respondents expressed the opinion that contract training will be of increasing importance in the future of community colleges" (p. 17).

Although communtiy college leaders argue that CCT serves all sectors of the community, it is clear that profit-making corporations are the major clients. According to Deegan and Drisko, 69% of the community college contracts are with business and industry. Fourteen percent of the contracts are with health care institutions, 13% are with government agencies and only 4% are with labor unions and other service agencies. Two-thirds of

the CCT courses are offered at the job site with most of the remainder being offered at the college.

The nature of the individual contracts varies widely. Sometimes, a specific corporation will sign an agreement with a specific college. For example, General Motors has contracts with several dozen community colleges for training their dealer technicians, otherwise known as auto mechanics. When the new models are introduced, the mechanics are given 2 to 12 day training courses on how to service the new equipment. GM typically trians the instructors, provides the necessary equipment and pays the college a fee to cover the instructor's salary and other costs. The curriculum is generally jointly developed by the instructor and the GM representative.

In other cases, the CCT contracts are part of a state-initiated program to keep existing industry in the area or to attract new industry. In these cases, the training is often offered to the company at no charge with the taxpayers picking up the tab. One of the largest training programs in the country exists in North Carolina and is administered by the State Department of Commerce's Industrial Development Division. The actual training is done by the Department of Community Colleges' Industry Services Division.

An examination of the contract between Phillip Morris and the Rowan Technical College shows how the North Carolina system works. The state's Employment Security Commission screens potential job applicants and Phillip Morris selects those who

will enter the state-run preemployment program. Some of those who complete the preemployment program are then hired and enter the company's training program that is run by the college. This training center is "a microcosm of the main plant. It has the exact same machines that are beign installed in the main plant" (Owen, 1984: p. 25). The major cost to the company was donating the equipment to the training center.

According to the plant's director of employee relations, "The plant had the smoothest startup in the history of Phillip Morris... Rowan Tech is not only doing a good job of training our people, our employees are second to none because we find in this area the most outstanding work ethic" (p. 25). Presumably, the lack of a strong labor movement in North Carolina also pleased Phillip Morris.

Similar programs exist in South Carolina, Illinois, New York, California,Texas and other states. During the past years, federal funds from the Job Training Partnership Act also subsidize the cost of job training. Subsidized training is attractive to large corporations to supplement their extensive in-house employee training programs, and to small and medium-sized corporations who can't afford in-house training.

In passing, it is also important to note that many four-year colleges are also getting involved in CCT. Technical institutions, like the Rochester Institute of Technology, are well-equipped to offer their services to business and industries, but liberal arts-oriented institutions like American University

are getting into the act as well. For example, AU signed contracts with Bell Atlantic to offer half-day workshops in time and stress management to secretaries. At a recent conference[1] on adult workers in higher education held in Saratoga Springs, N.Y., representatives from small liberal arts colleges jammed the workshops on contract training.

Conflicting Interests

A major theme of most discussions of school-business partnerships,in general, and CCT, in particular, is that everybody benefits. For example, one business executive states: "The goal of the industrialist and the goal of an educator are the same, namely, to maximize the potential of people" (Elliman, 1984: p. 25). Speaking more specifically about CCT, a community college president says that two-year institutions can make a unique contriubtion to higher education "by demonstrating training and educational results that improve life quality for participants, that help them actualize their social and economic pursuits, that meet business and industry expectations, and that achieve the bottom line-- the economic growth and development of the country" (Connor, 1984: p. 30).

Unfortunately, the reality is considerably more complex. Although CCT may be good for General Motors and other corporations, it may or may not be good for workers who are trying to maintain their job security or who are trying to get their first job after leaving school. Although CCT may bring

increased revenue for community colleges, it also may have undesirable effects on the curriculum. The remainder of this paper will analyze the effects of CCT on different constituencies.

Corporations (Business and Industry)

Business and industry spend between $40 and $100 billion annually on employee training. Half of the funds go to pay the cost of trainers' salaries,training materials and overhead, while the other half goes to pay the costs of employee salaries and fringe benefits while they are being trained.

A recent report by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching put the annual training cost at $80 billion. Between 7 and 8 million worker are trianed each year and between 60 and 80% of the courses are offered in-house. Employee training is most likely to be found in larger corporations and in the following industries: banking, insurance, public utilities and industrial manufacturing (Eurich, 1985: also see Carnevale and Goldstein, 1983).

Private corporations and educational institutions have developed a division of labor in the area of training and education over the years. The schools have concentrated on teaching basic literacy skills, general math and technical skills, overviews of the social sciences and humanities, and last, but not least, work habits and citizenship. Business and industry, on the other hand, have offered specific training

geared to the needs of their individual corporations. This could take the form of formal courses, workshops, orientation manuals and on-the-job training.

Corporate leaders have liked this division oflabor for several reasons. First, offering general education would have increased their costs dramatically. Since these skills would be transferable to other corporations, business executives have usually seen general education as a bad investment that is more appropriately undertaken by the public schools at the taxpayer's expense.

On the other hand, hands-on training to operate a specific machine or repair a specific piece of equipment has generally been viewed as a necessary cost of doing business by cororate leaders. By controlling this specific training, executives know exactly what is being taught and how the instruction is being carried out. They can also insure the necessary flexibility when new training is needed. Generous tax deductions take some of the financial bite out of the cost of training.

However, the rational for employer-financed training is not just technical. A recent report of the American Society for Training and Development, the professional organization for industry trainers, states: "We cannot ignore such motivations in offering employee training as building morale, enhancing loyalty to the firm and/or attracting desirable employees" (Carnevale and Goldstein, 1983:p.32; also see Eurich, 1985). These

non-technical tasks have generally been seen as inappropriate for public educational institutions.

This traditional division of labor between schools and corporations, however, has been breaking down during the past 10 years. Corporate leaders have complained that they have found it necessary to offer courses in basic skills and general technical skills since the schools, especially the high schools, have failed to do the job properly (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983; Pincus, 1983).

Business leaders have also been worried that schools have failed to teach young people about the "work ethic." Two studies show that employers are more concerned with high school graduates' failure to be punctual, to follow instructions and to take pride in their work than with their ability to read, write and do basic arithmetic. "In the eyes of most employers, the chief value of an educational credential -- especially a postsecondary degree -- is to insure that the applicant has good work habits and positive attitudes" (Wilms, 1984: p.349; also see Crain, 1984).

As a result of the cognitive and non-cognitive failures of the schools, business leaders have decided to take a more active role in all levels of education. A wide array of school-business partnerships have emerged across the country. One major argument is that if American workers become more productive, American corporations will become more competitive with those in Western Europe and Asia. In fact, problems in the schools are now

generally cited as a major contributing factor to the sluggish U.S. economy.

Whether or not educational problems actually are major contributing factors to this country's economic problem is, of course, a topic of some controversy. It could be argued, for example, that the continually high unemployment and underemployment of many young people reduces their motivation to take their studies or their jobs seriously. It could also be argued that problems in the auto industry have more to do with management's failure to build reliable, fuel-efficient, inexpensive cars than with auto workers' inability to follow instructions.

Nevertheless, it is absolutely clear that long-term economic problems have begun to cause changes in the way employees are trained. Corporations are trying to reduce their labor costs, including in-house training, to compete with foreign products. "Flexibility" has become a major theme in training since rapid technological change results in frequent changes in training. Just as educational institutions are trying to become more flexible by reducing the proportion of tenured faculty, large corporations are trying to hold the line on the size of their training departments. Small and medium firms, who can't afford extensive employer-financed training, need their employees trained and retrained more than ever.

Enter community colleges and CCT. Since training is customized, employers still maintain a great deal of control.

Since training is by contract, employers don't have to hire permanent employees. If the training is subsidized by the state or federal governments, the cost could be lower than a comparible in-house program. One executive put it this way: "Customers (business and industry) can see real benefit from buying services and avoiding the fixed costs involved in hiring staff to do the teaching. It is financially viable to subcontract training to educational institutions" (Luther, 1984: p.81).

The major complaint made by business and industry is that most community colleges are not flexible enough to meet their needs. CCT programs and workshops must be developed quickly, rather than being bogged down in curriculum committees and other bureaucratic procedures. Courses must often be referred on-site at non-traditional hours, neither of which is liked by many instrutors. The training must be concrete and concise, neither of which are traits found in most academics. If these shortcomings can be eliminated, corporate leaders have everything to gain from CCT. However, business and industry's gain is not necessarily a plus for the community colleges.

Community Colleges

It is clear that community colleges also derive certain benefits from CCT. Most importantly, two-year institutions gain increased revenue. In a recent survey of community colleges, "increased revenue" was cited as te second most important

benefit of CCT, with "increased relations with business and industry" being number one (Deegan and Drisko, 1985).

The revenue comes from several different sources. Corporations usually pay a fee to the college on a per/student or a per/course basis. In some states, like New York, community colleges receive FTE funds from the state for contract students. This would mean that community colleges could charge employers a lower fee for the same training than other institutions. Community colleges are often conduits for state and federal training program funds, which would also mean low costs for the employer.

The colleges also gain other valuable resources from CCT. They gain access to state-of-the-art technology if the contract requires the corporation to donate or lend equipment to the college. If the contract stipulates that a full-time faculty member be trained by the company, this is another added resource for the college.

One example of how these principles operate can be seen in a recent agreement between Monroe Community College and the Rochester Products Division of General Motors in New York State. The company wanted to implement "statistical process control" (SPC) in order to eliminate the production of defective parts. A full-time instructor at the college who had previous experience in training took a one-year leave of absence and was employed by the company. After receiving SPC training at company expense, the instructor then designed a series of 5 courses for the

prospective SPC technicians -- manufacturing math, blueprint reading, geometric tolerance and dimensioning, gage training, and SPC. The courses were then offered through the college upon the instructor's return. The company received low-cost training and the college got FTE money, fees from the company and a better trained faculty member. The instructor who designed the courses got an added financial bonus: he jointly owns, with the company, the five course curricula if they are ever sold to other employers.

Although the company's director of training said, "Working with the college we got excellent service at a reasonable rate," even lower rates would have been better. One college instructor who taught another contract course for Rochester Products told me that a company representative wanted to cut out the college altogether by hiring the instructor on a free-lance basis. Apparently, the instructor would have received more and the cost to the company would have been less if the college wasn't involved. The instructor, citing loyalty to the college, refused the offer.

Another clear benefit of CCT for community colleges is the increased political support from business and industry. A joint business-community college lobbying effort could mean increased funding for two-year institutions by state legislatures; after all, businesses could argue that CCT will lead to increased productivity and economic growth. In addition, the greater

visibility of community colleges could well lead to increased enrollments.

Although all of this is consistent with the argument that everyone benefits from CCT, there are many potential problems that are rarely explored. These problems stem from one important fact: contrary to the widely held belief, the goals and interests of corporations and colleges are not always the same.

From the corporation's perspective, training should provide employees with just enough technical skills and "positive" attitudes so that the corporation can operate at a profit. Ernest Boyer, President of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching states:

> "Because the corporate classroom is ultimately concerned about productivity and performance, its goals are apt to be specific, even narrow. Such nontraditional education has an essential place in our society" (Boyer, 1985: p.xiv).

Educational institutions, on the other hand, have broader goals. In addition to teaching concrete skills, schools are supposed to address abstract topics like philosophy and values from a wide variety of perspectives. Depending on who you talk to, schools are also supposed to examine different ways of looking at the world, including the organization of work.

> "Corporate classrooms are not likely to achieve the kind of insight and understanding that can result when students and teachers meet together, not only to acquire information and develop skills, but also to weigh alternatives and reflect

> upon deeper meanings. The goal of collegiate education, at its best, is to show how skills can be given meaning, place information in a larger context, and discover the relationship of knowledge to life's dilemmas" (Boyer, 1985: p.xiv).

This broader perspective may or may not be consistent with the interests of business and industry. For example, business leaders would be less-than-happy if many students began to believe that blue collar and white collar jobs are becoming more boring and less skilled.

If corporations expect community colleges to take on more of employee training which would include the narrow, pro-business perspective of most in-house training, the community colleges could face profound problems. According to Boyer,

> "The danger is that, in a bid for survival, higher education will imitate its rivals, that careerism will dominate the campus as collges pursue the marketplace goals of corporate education. If that happens, higher learning may discover that, having abandoned its own special mission, it will find itself in a contest it cannot win" (p.xiv).

In terms of community colleges, there are several specific problems. First, the liberal arts, which had been steadily weakened by careerism even before the growth of CCT, may disappear altogether from the community college curriculum. Historically, community college educators have attempted to balance the needs of corporations for trained workers and the

need for students for a balanced, broad education. Educators controlled the liberal arts transfer programs and planned the vocational curriculum in consultation with corporate advisory boards. In spite of this pretense of educational balance and autonomy, community colleges have become vocational institutions with the majority of the students neither getting any kind of formal degree nor transferring to a four-year institution.

With the growth of CCT, community colleges will be even more focused on the needs of business, with corporate leaders having an explicit joint role in developing a narrowly focused curriculum. "These programs make the firm or the corporation the client and the principal beneficiary of the program. Any broader educational needs of students necessarily are of secondary importance" (Pratzner, 1983: p.14; also see Glover and Grubb, 1983; Grubb, 1984).

In effect, educators are giving up control of the curriculum. The following comment about two-year vocational programs by a community college proponent applies even more to CCT:

> "Orientation toward the world of work requires that substantial or primary control of what is learned, and possibly even how it is learned, be removed from the institution and its personnel, largely faculty. The educational program does not then differ radically from in-service training provided by business and industry for its employees. This is a different concept for faculty and

> administration to accept, yet, in one sense it merely substitutes service to business, industry, labor, and the military for service to the senior collegiate institutions" (Grede, 1981: p.7).

Although proponents insist that CCT won't draw resources away from the liberal arts, there are strong reasons to believe otherwise. One major theme of a special issue of "New Directions for Community Colleges" (Kopecek and Clark, 1984) is that for CCT to be successful, the entire college must be committed to it. In addition, some bureaucratic restructuring will be necessary.

> "Academic program administrators need to broaden their professional concerns beyond the scope of preservice programs. Deans and program directors must alter their priorities. Methods of administering and managing must be adapted to ensure that all of the productive time of these academic administrators is not consumed by the demands of preservice programs. (Kopecek, 1984: p.11).

Full-time faculty, especially those in traditional vocational programs would also be involved in CCT according to this scenario.

> "Institutional integrity must be preserved, but an entrepreneurial style is essential. Entrepreneurship is an atypical attribute for most individuals currently employed in education, but that is the nature of CCT activities. The honest tension between institutional integrity and

entrepreneurship must be acknowledged. Staff members must recognize that they are selling their programs in a competitive market" (Kopecek, 1984: p.8).

It is highly doubtful that the liberal arts will be able to grow and prosper in this entrepreneurial atmosphere. The best that can be said is that the liberal arts won't be weakened any more than it already is, but even this may be too optimistic.

Even if the liberal arts do survive, they may be cleansed of any controversial material that might threaten the budding partnership between corporations and community colleges. In fact, Secretary of Education William Bennett has been promoting such a "classic" version of the humanities for the past several years (Bennett, 1984). Discussions of racism and sexism are out while the study of white male "founders" of western civilization are in. Critical discussions of capitalism are out while tauting the strengths of the free enterprise system is in.

As the community colleges become increasingly oriented toward serving the business community, it would not be surprising if what survives as the liberal arts curriculum also becomes increasingly pro-business. Will literature instructors be able to use classic novels showing the excesses of specific corporations or industries, or would safer novels be chosen? Can social science courses objectively examine the organization of work in socialistic countries and compare it to work in the United States? Can science courses deal with controversial issues like occupational health and safety? Will instructors

with "public interest" orientations a la Ralph Nader be acceptable? What about Marxists? Will they train students to have the proper respect for authority and positive attitudes toward work? How critical can critical thinking be?

This uncritical pro-business orientation can also exist at four-year colleges with contracts. For example, Bell Atlantic viewed the time and stress-management workshops for their secretaries as doing something "nice" for their employees. Yet, a liberal arts instructor could view this as a form of speed-up which ultimately benefits the company more than the secretaries. It is doubtful if the American University workshop instructor raised this point with the secretaries.

The potential negative effects of CCT on community colleges is sometimes mentioned by some CCT proponents, but this is usually nothing more than a passing comment. When a senior research specialist from the National Center for Research in Vocational Education published an article raising quesions about the effects of CCT, he had to include a disclaimer (Pratzner, 1983). When I raised these issues with community college representatives at the Saratoga Springs conference, I usually got blank stares and shrugs. Everyone was so interested in learning to be entreprenurial with regard to CCT that they were reluctant to think about the potential long term negative effects.

So, the financial gains for community colleges from CCT may not be worth the price of the potential changes in the curricu-

lum. Although the two-year institutions might flourish as increasingly narrow vocational training institutions, they will not be providing students what they need to understand the increasingly complex world around them.

Students and Workers

Young community college students seeking skills for entry-level jobs probably will not be directly affected by CCT one way or the other. Since most CCT programs are available to those who are already employed in the contracting companies, they will not be much help to those seeking employment. At best, then, most young community college students will not be any worse off while a few may gain entry-level skills.

If, however, CCT draws resources away from the liberal arts programs in community colleges, these students will be hurt. Since students would have less of a chance to receive a well-rounded liberal arts education, they would be less employable. In addition, they would be less able to understand the complex world in which they live. This is especially problematic for the working class and minority students who are supposed to benefit from the community colleges.

On the other hand, CCT programs could benefit workers who are employed by the contracting companies. Increased training could well lead to promotions, salary increases and more job security. If productivity increases as a result of CCT, the

company could become financially secure which would reduce the likelihood of plant closings or layoffs.

Yet, many of these workers would have been trained anyway, even if CCT did not exist. Auto mechanics must learn how to repair the new model cars each year and secretaries must learn how to run new word processors. If CCT were not around, the companies would have to provide the training in-house or subcontract it to someone else.

In some cases, CCT doesn't lead to promotion or salary increases. In the statistical process control technician program run by Rochester Products and Monroe Community College described above, workers who complete the program and receive a certificate don't stand a better change of being promoted or receiving a raise than anyone else. According to the company representative, promotions are based on seniority due to the union contract. One can't help wondering if the company planned to use the SPC certificate to try to drive a wedge between the union and its members on the seniority question.

This same lack of connection between training and economic rewards exists in the well-publicized "nickle-an-hour" retraining agreement between the United Automobile Workers and two major auto manufacturers. Under the agreement, the companies contribute 5 cents per employee hour to a fund for retraining former auto workers who are on long-term or permanent layoffs. Community colleges run many of the specific training programs. The training, however, is irrelevant to whether or not the

employee will be recalled by the company; this is determined by seniority (Sorge, 1983a,b).

Of course, the worker has a better chance to find a job in some other company if the retraining included the acquisition of transferable skills. However, such workers may face the ironical situation of having to take a pay cut in spite of their increased skills. Non-unionized electronics technicians, for example, have lower salaries than unionized assembly line workers in the auto industries. The extent and direction of the occupational mobility of displaced workers, of course, is a matter of considerable debate (Rumberger, 1984).

Getting back to CCT, the relatively narrow, pragmatic orientations of these programs could reduce the levels of transferable skills that the participants could learn. In the manufacturing math component of the SPC technician program, for example, workers needed to find the logarithms of certain numbers. Rather than learning the concepts behind logarithms, however, they were simply taught to push the "log" button of their hand calculators. From the company's perspective, this makes sense since the prospective technicians would know what they need to know to do the job. From an educator's perspective, on the other hand, the course failed to teach workers a concept that would enhance their basic transferable skills in math.

In other words, some students and workers receive some benefits from CCT. These benefits, however, pale in significance to those obtained by the companies.

Conclusion

Given the conflicting interests of companies, colleges, workers and students, CCT cannot be expected to benefit everyone equally. I have argued that corporate leaders have everything to gain from CCT, especially if they can get the colleges to be more responsive to their needs and break down the resistance from traditional educators. Community colleges derive some economic and political gains from CCT but face profound disruptions in their curriculum and a potential loss of their educational autonomy. The losses faced by the colleges are not worth the gains.

On an individual level, most community college students won't be directly affected by CCT, although they will be indirectly hurt by the disruptions in the curriculum. Workers in CCT programs will be helped to some extent, but they won't gain as much as the head's of their company will.

Although educators have traditionally not been anti-business, they have been skeptical of direct business involvement in the educational process. This skepticism has been well-deserved and should be encouraged, in spite all the current talk about school-business partnerships. The interests of corporate leaders is not identical to the interests of workers, educators andd students.

Footnotes

1. The complete title of the conference was "Adult Workers and Higher Education: Industry, Labor and Educational Innovation." Held on June 5-7, 1985, the conference was one of a series of regional conferences sponsored by the American Council on Education's Commission on Higher Education and the Adult Learner. The Saratoga Springs Conference was co-sponsored by Empire State College, a division of the State University of New York.

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